



# Balancing Act

Collaboration between  
medical providers and  
investigators in serious  
child abuse cases.

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# Headlines



## Uncle sentenced in toddler's death

SAN DIEGO — A City Heights man convicted of fatally injuring his month-old niece while baby-sitting was sentenced Monday to life in prison.

Prosecutors charged Roman with fatally injuring Dayanara at the home he shared with his wife and other family members on 42nd Street near University Avenue. The child's mother, Alma Vasquez, was away on an errand.

Roman told police the child had fallen off a bed earlier that afternoon. He admitted he had hit the child in the past, but said he had not done so in the past three or four months. He said he had hit her with a horsewhip, given her cold baths and rubbed a chili pepper on her mouth to punish her.

— Dana Littlefield

## offer clue to baby's death, prosecutor tells court

taken by ambulance the afternoon of Dec. 20, 2002 after Diaz called 911, found signs of hemorrhaging, brain damage and the bleeding in the eyes and

orthopedic injuries. Christine Diaz is charged with assaulting a child under 8 and causing death. If convicted, she would face 25 years to life in prison.

Prosecutor Gary Hachmeier said the boy died after being violently shaken by Diaz, the 35-year-old day care provider who was caring for Cooper at her home day care on Edgeware Road in Kensington, who had been placed in her care by her parents just a few weeks before. The Spring Valley con-

tractor, the child was not shaken or harmed by his client. Hachmeier said Cooper had no sign of violent shaking.

Dayanara was taken to Children's Hospital the afternoon of Jan. 16, 2003, with a brain hemorrhage, fractured skull and bruises. She was in a coma for two days, then died.

A San Diego Superior Court jury found Enrique Roman, 33, guilty of second-degree murder and assault on a child in the skyway. Vasquez, who doctors said died of blunt-force injuries,

— Dana Littlefield

causes of death were ruled out: The baby had no history of medical problems or illnesses, and the bleeding in the eyes led authorities to rule out Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, he said.

Plourd said numerous character witnesses will testify that Diaz was a compassionate, competent caregiver for their children. "She's the type of person that has always had a very big heart for children," he said. He told jurors Diaz was under stress and having a difficult time adjusting to Cooper who had been placed in her care by her parents just a few weeks before. The Spring Valley contractor, the child was not shaken or harmed by his client.

Hachmeier said Cooper had no sign of violent shaking. Other jurors said the child was not shaken or harmed by his client. The defense lawyer also said the medical evidence will corroborate his client, Cooper had no injuries when he was brought to the hospital. There were no fractures or bruises typically seen in shaken-baby cases, Plourd said.

There were some strange

things, though, Plourd said. The baby had a bluish red rash on his face and chest and around his mouth, the attorney said. His glucose levels were elevated, as were his sodium levels — anomalies that Plourd did not explain but said indicated "something" was going on with this child.

Medical experts for the defense will say that the facial hemorrhages "mean nothing," Plourd said, and that they can't be relied on to conclude a baby was shaken.

He said the extensive efforts to revive the baby, in addition to the effects of being on a respirator for two days, can explain the injuries.

Authorities: Toddler died of head trauma

By: JOHN HALL - Staff Writer

A 16-month-old girl died as a result of head trauma, authorities said Wednesday, and the Murrieta boyfriend of the toddler's mother appeared in court on charges he caused the death. Karianne Bradley was pronounced dead at 1:23 p.m. Sunday at Children's Hospital in San Diego, Murrieta police Sgt. Jim Ganley said.

An autopsy was conducted Tuesday by the San Diego County medical examiner's office. Karianne had "severe injuries to her head," as well as severe abdominal trauma, Ganley said Wednesday. Authorities initially believed the toddler could have died as a result of shaken baby syndrome. Ganley said that hasn't been entirely ruled out, but that the medical examiner's office says her death appears to be more from blunt-force trauma to her head.

The cause of death is pending further toxicological and neurological tests being done, Ganley said.

## Goals



- To define the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse evaluation
- To understand that professionals responding to serious child abuse cases have unique interests that may be in conflict with one another.
- To understand why conflict arises
- To develop solutions to minimize conflict

**Many people.....balancing  
priorities.....**

**To understand that professionals have unique interests that may be in conflict with one another.**

**“The Conflict”**

# Case

- 16 month old male
- 911 call

- Transported by EMS at 7pm with vomiting and respiratory distress to trauma center
- History: woke up sick this morning, mother states he may have fallen down the stairs and bumped his head

# Case

- Injuries included
  - Old tibia fracture
  - Occipital skull fracture
  - Rib fractures left 6-10
  - Multiple bruises and puncture wounds
  - Torn frenulum
  - Duodenal transection, SMV laceration, pancreatic contusion, adrenal contusion, disruption of mesentery to entire right colon

**Patient Photos Confidential**

**Patient Photos Confidential**

# 911 called, EMS activated



Bruce City EMS (c)2007

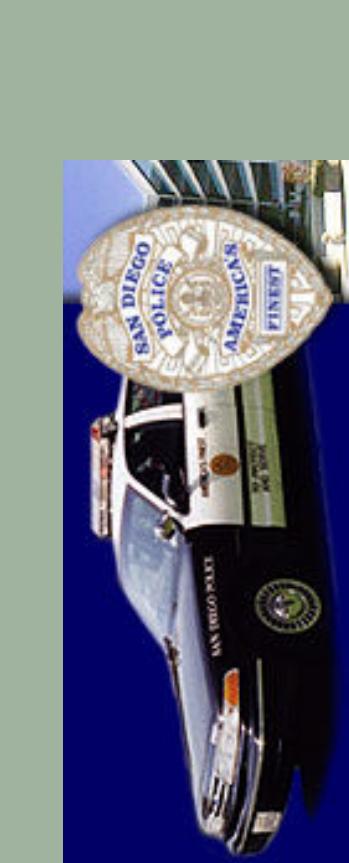
# Law Enforcement Patrol Officer

- Goals:**
- Protect the Victim.
  - Secure the scene.
  - Collect/preserve evidence.

**Timeframe:** Immediate

- Attitudes:**
- Don't assume..
  - Investigate

**CA Experience level:**  
**limited for child abuse**  
**Language:** “Cop Talk”



# Emergency Medical Services

Goals: -Assess scene.

-Identify and treat life threatening conditions.

Timeframe: Immediate

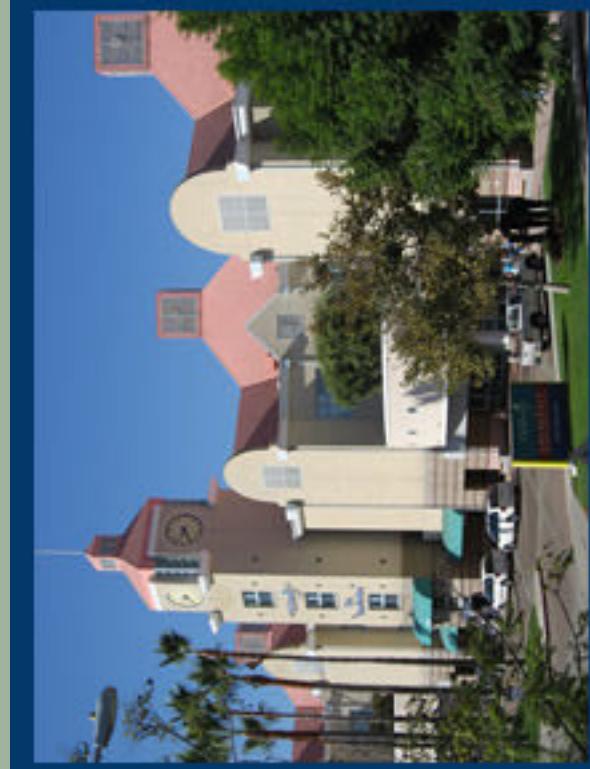
Attitudes: Scoop and haul mentality  
Young/skeptical

NAT Experience level: Minimal to None

Language: EMS/medical jargon



# Transfer to Trauma Center



# Rady Children's Trauma Team

- Goals:** -Identify/treat all life threatening injuries definitively.  
-Family centered care and advocacy.
- Timeframe:** Immediate/acute
- Attitudes:** patient stabilization is only priority



**Experience level:** Moderate to expert depending on team.

**Language:** Medical jargon

# Licensed Medical Social Worker

## Goals:

- Support everyone
  - Gather information
  - Family support
- Timeframe: Immediate to hours/days

Attitude: feels pulled in multiple directions

Experience level: Varies

Language: Medical



# **Transfer to PICU**



# Rady Children's ICU Team

**Goals:** -Acute management of **injuries** with multidisciplinary team.  
-Family centered care and advocacy.

-Share information with LE and CPT/CPS who are building case against perpetrator.

**Timeframe:** Immediate/acute  
**Attitudes:** patient health and injuries take priority

**Experience level:** Moderate to expert depending on team.

**Language:** Medical.



# Child Abuse Detective

## Goals:

- Evidence examination
- Awaiting medical opinion
- Communication with officers at scene
- Compiling of case

Timeframe: Months

72 hour window

Attitudes: Who's perpetrator?

Experience level: Varied to very experienced

Language: Tri-lingual- Law enforcement, medical, and legal



# Rady Children's Child Abuse Physician

**Goals:** Evaluate injuries and plausible mechanisms

**Timeframe:** Days to months

**Attitudes:** Varies

**Experience level:**  
Pediatricians with child abuse expertise

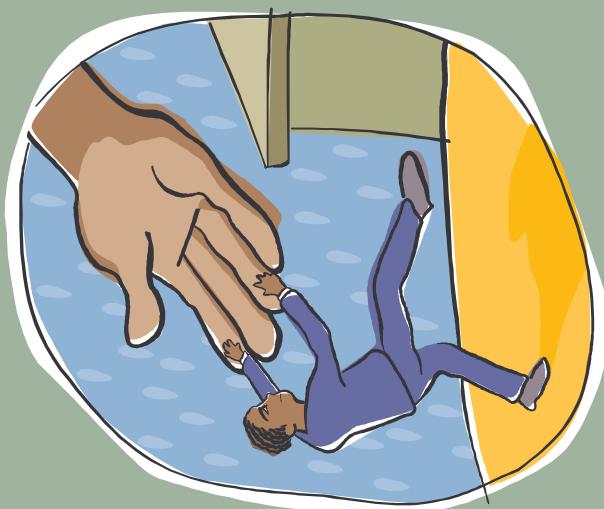
**Language:** Medical



# Child Welfare Services

## Goals:

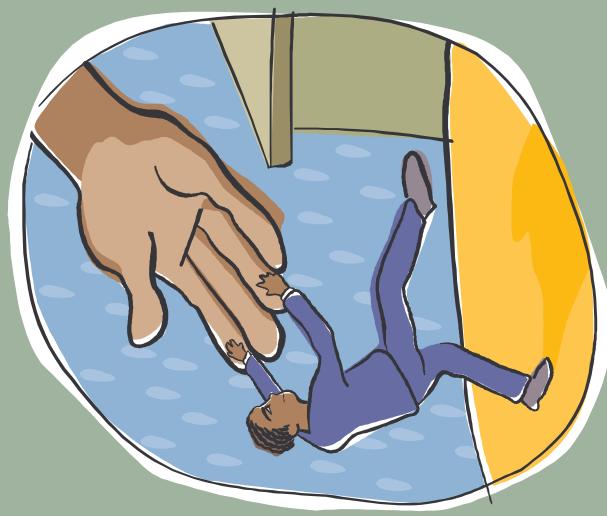
- Gather information
  - Determine protective issues and risk factors.
  - Determine safety of siblings
- 
- Reduce/eliminate risk of future abuse.



# Child Welfare Services

Timeframe: Minutes to days/months  
-hospital holds  
Attitudes: dealing with family perception

Experience Levels:  
Varies greatly  
Language: Many agency acronyms



# Postmortem



# Homicide Detective

**Goals:** Determine perpetrator  
and build case for DA

**Timeframe:** from death of child  
to years

**Attitudes:** discomfort with death  
of child

**Experience level:** very  
experienced with homicide, less  
with child abuse

**Language:** Trilingual – medical,  
police, legal



# Medical Examiner

**Goals:** Determine cause of death, evidence collection

**Timeline:** from death of child through prosecution

**Attitudes:** control of body

**Experience level:** varied

**Language:** Medical, legal



## Other Issues

- Multiple interviewers
- Media
- Space/privacy/HIPAA
- Need to know/when to know/want to know
- Information exchange
- Termination of medical support
- Individual Biases

## Case Summary

- Hospital Course – 28 day admission including multiple surgeries for management of duodenal perforation, SMV laceration, pancreatic contusion, R colon resection
- Discharged to CPS, foster care
- Stepfather confessed during polygraph, conviction resulted in 15 year sentence



## Case Examples of Conflicts

- Audience Input

**To develop solutions to minimize  
conflict**

**“The Resolution”**

**What does the literature contain  
regarding multidisciplinary teams and  
outcomes?**

A Review.....



## Best Practice - Abuse Investigation

- Multidisciplinary team investigations
- Trained child forensic interviewers
- Videotaped child interviews
- Specialized medical forensic exams
- Victim advocacy and support programs
- Improved access to mental health treatment for victims
- Child Advocacy Centers

Jones et al, Trauma Violence Abuse 2005

## Possible solutions to minimize conflict:

- Cross training
- Shared interviews
- Open and ongoing communication
  - Attitudes, mutual respect
- Collaboration with other agencies
  - Sharing resources
  - Sharing reports
  - Being available

## Possible solutions to minimize conflict: (continued)

- Multidisciplinary meetings:
  - CPT
  - CPT Management
  - Child Fatality
- Child abuse team based on DEC or DV teams
- Understanding restrictions of agencies
  - timing of investigations



## Multidisciplinary Teams

- Group of professionals who represent various disciplines
  - Law enforcement
  - CPS
  - Prosecution
  - Mental health
  - Medical
  - Victim advocacy
- Work collaboratively to promote a thorough understanding of case issues
- Assure effective system response



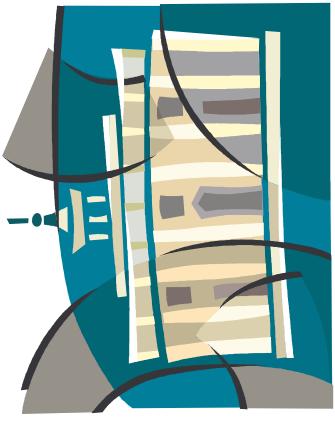
## Multidisciplinary Teams

- Coordinate investigative agencies
- Mandated in 36 states as of 1999
- All states require cross-referral of child abuse cases
- Nature of that collaboration varies



## Multidisciplinary Teams

- Increase interagency cooperation
- Promote accountability
- Improve tracking of cases
- Increase the efficient use of community services and resources
- Reduce number of interviews
- Develop coordinated plans for meeting family needs, including protection



## Child Advocacy Centers

- First established 1985
- To improve the community collaborative response to child abuse and the criminal justice processing of child abuse cases
- Goal of not causing further harm to the children involved
- Requires a multidisciplinary response
  - Investigation, treatment, management and prosecution of child abuse cases

# CAC Core Components

- Child-friendly facility
- Multidisciplinary team
- Investigative child interview
- Medical examinations
- Provision of mental health services
- Victim advocacy
- Case review
- Case tracking
- Organizational structure

Jackson, S.L. Child Abuse & Neglect, 2004

## Questions/Comments?

